

The Effect of Listening Education Practices Organized by Active Learning Techniques on the Attitudes of 6th Grade Students Towards Turkish Course¹

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the effect of listening education practices that organized by active learning techniques on the attitudes of 6th grade students towards Turkish course. The sample of the study conducted at a secondary school in the Black Sea region of Turkey consisted of twenty students –ten girls and ten boys-. During ten-week training process, some listening practices organized by the techniques of snowball, sandwiches, card-showing, card-matching, information paper sack, hourglass, writing poetry, bingo, shift is yours and mind mapping techniques were applied to students each week. In the study, the survey form method, one of the qualitative research methods, was adopted. At the end of ten weeks of the application process, three students selected by typical case sampling that is one of the purposeful sampling techniques were surveyed. Those students expressed that active learning techniques were effective, entertaining and like a game. They also stated that these techniques increased solidarity and cooperation in the classroom, they were effective to identify the text elements such as main idea, supporting idea, topic, event, character, place, and time. The Students also expressed that these techniques trained them while entertaining, and with these techniques Turkish course became more enjoyable and fun for them.

Keywords: Active Learning Techniques, Listening Education, Turkish Course, Attitude.

INTRODUCTION

Active learning has also been known as effective learning, interactive education, education without memorizing, and learning by experience. To put it in the simplest way, it means the teacher's actively presenting the information and the students' passively receiving it, which is the opposite way of traditional teaching (Meyers and Jones, 1993: 19). According to Binbasioglu (2003: 75), active learning approach is not new; If the history of education is closely examined, active learning can be seen in different forms. In the 16th century, philosophers like Rabelais and J. J. Rousseau emphasized the importance of active learning as saying; "A child is not a vessel to be filled, but is a fire to be burned". In the 19. and 20. centuries, Adolphe Ferriere's school in Switzerland, Hugo Gaudig's works in Germany, Ovid Decroly's System in Belgium, Washburne's Winnetka System in the United States, and Helena Parkhurst's Dalton Plan pointed out the necessity of creating an educational environment that provides effective participation of students and teaches them how to learn learning.

Active learning is a learning process that provides the learner to bear the responsibility for the learning process, gives the learner decision-making and self-regulation opportunities, and forces the learner to use his/her mental abilities while learning through complex educational assignments (Acikgoz, 2003: 17). Active learning requires students to do something and to think about what they are doing. In active learning, students do more than just listening, the transfer of knowledge is less, but the development of students' skills is emphasized more. Active learning requires students to develop their high level thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating and also requires them to participate in reading, discussion, and writing activities.

Active learning aims to develop students' skills and abilities by offering them opportunities of "speaking, listening, reading, writing and reflecting their abilities into the course" rather than to develop students at the level of knowledge. Active learning is a learning environment where the knowledge is obtained through actual experiences. It is also designed in a form for keeping students active in the learning process (Beck, 1997: 35). Active learning is an approach to involve individuals actively in the learning process. In order to encourage this participation, learners must be given the opportunities to read, to write, to talk, to discuss, to connect with past experiences, to practice their knowledge in everyday life and to do their own problem-solving processes by themselves. With this way, students find opportunities to make decisions in active learning process, to take responsibility and especially to learn how to learn (Aydin & Koc, 2012). Being dominant in traditional education, rote learning left its place to wondering, doubting, learning by experience, doing research and application in active learning process. Learners will learn how to work in a team, how to help each other, how to share tasks and how to reach a consensus by discussing matters (Demirel, 2003: 213). Kyriacoy et al. (1999: 20) suggest that if students engage with the learning activities which give students significant ability to control over the learning process, they can achieve active learning.

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In one sense, active learning was born as a reaction against the traditional teaching methods in which the teacher transfers particular information using direct teaching techniques and students can be seen as a simple recipient. Changes in the world and technological and scientific advancements have affected the basis of this reaction (Hossain & Aydin, 2011). In other words, because traditional teaching methods couldn't respond the needs of the present era, new education approaches arose. Active learning is one of the most emphasized approaches.

According to Mumford (1997: 42), effective learning principles are as follows:

- it is a whole process that has stages.
- it includes upgradable skills and behaviors.
- it is based on experience.
- it develops in the direction of individual's requests and needs.
- it is individual in terms of different requirements and preferred learning methods; is societal in terms of criticism, opportunities and environments.

Students can not learn just by listening to the teacher or memorizing prepared worksheets or answering the questions. Learning does not occur with expression and demonstration, on the contrary, this situation ends learning process. Only active learning can provide this. Students should be able to talk about what they learned, to write, to relate them with their past experiences and to apply them to their everyday lives. Active participation allows students participate in learning process from the beginning of information transfer. Active participation requires discussion of the topics, not the expression of them. It provides to be thought on the subjects, to be sought logical answers, to be revived opposing ideas, and to be evoked the enthusiasm of obtaining more information about the subject (Lubbers and Gorcyca, 1997: 68). Learner is actively involved in the learning process, leads his/her own learning, uses his/her high thinking and decision-making skills and cooperates with other learners. Teacher is the one who facilitates learning in this process and learns along with his/her students (Kalem and Fer, 2003). In active learning, learner and teacher gather the information together and use it together. The basic philosophy of active learning is gathering new information and then establishing ties with the old ones. In active learning approach, learners group is in a cooperation, not in a race (Ward and Tiesen, 1997: 22). The student who reaches information will have brought learning process under control. The student who waits for the information to come will just have to confine himself/herself with the given information.

Active learning has combined participating an interactive event with hearing, seeing and processing of information. Active learning can be permanent at the rate of ninety percent in the classes where active learning applied. Learning is not a spectator sport. Students can not learn just by sitting and listening to the teacher, or by memorizing prepared worksheets and by responding to questions. They should talk about what they learned, and should write, should relate to their past experiences and should apply them to their everyday lives (Chickering and Gamson, 1987: 3). Active learning has significant importance in terms of providing lifelong learning, developing critical and creative thinking, supporting children with learning difficulties, contributing to the gifted children's development, assisting new teachers in classroom management and contributing to the development of democratic consciousness.

Active learning prioritizes the student's playing active role in the teaching process. Students carry the responsibility of learning and fulfill the activities required by teaching methods. Active learners have enthusiasm of learning and "curiosity" of knowledge. They are also the people who think more about the subject, and integrate new information with previous ones. In active learning, students participate in the lesson, care about improving their skills, and get themselves to the higher level of thinking; while they are encouraged to participate in the activities such as reading, writing and discussing etc., and they are taken into account with their attitudes and values (Aydin, 2014). Active learning not only affects successful students but also unsuccessful ones positively. In particular, in the group activities of active learning, each student's carrying the responsibility allows them to develop a sense of responsibility and a sense of achievement along with the other students. At this point, unsuccessful students take the achievement on them; the relevant situation brings along an interest and active participation in learning together. Students get excited to share their own works with their friends and eagerly listen to the feedbacks.

Active learning techniques used in the study can be explained as follows:

Snowball

Students firstly consider about a given topic or a problem by themselves, then discuss it in a two-people group, then in a four-people group, and in an eight people-group. The reason why the method is called *snowball* is the group's expanding step by step. The obtained results from the last group are presented to the class (Akpınar, 2011).

Sandwich

Butter-bread technique has two stages. This is followed by other stages in the sandwich technique. Students can

do multi-stage practices such as doing individual works firstly, then sharing them with their friends, then creating a tangible product and offering these products to the class. Since this technique is multi-layered, it is named as 'sandwich' (Maden, 2011).

Card showing

This method gives students some opportunities of reviewing what they learned, assessing, and deciding etc. Firstly, students are distributed 3-5 multi-colored small cards or piece of papers. Each color has a meaning. For example; green: *I agree completely*; blue: *I agree*; white: *I am undecided*; yellow: *I disagree*; red: *I totally disagree*. Then teacher reads some sentences on the topic taught in the class. After thinking for a while, students put the card they choose on their desks. Later on, each student explains why s/he chooses the card (Maden, 2011).

Card Matching

This method is applied for the purposes of reviewing, clarifying or maintaining permanence of the lessons learned. The processes applied during the process are as follows:

Two sets of cards are prepared containing half of the number of students in each class. In the first set; there are questions about what is learned, concepts, examples etc. In the second set; there are answers, descriptions, definitions, principles, and events that can be matched to those of the first set. The cards from one of the sets are numbered. Cards are distributed to the class. Students are given a certain amount of time for the preparation related to the cards they have. Students seek the other pair of their cards by asking questions around the classroom. After they match their cards, they prepare the real ones. Card numbers are said randomly and the chosen number presents the contents of her/his card and the real one s/he prepares to the class (Taspinar, 2014).

Information Paper sack

It provides the pre-learned information to be associated with the new learned ones. Processes applied during the application are as follows:

- 1) a paper sack is given to each student, the key names, events or concepts of the topic is determined for the discussion
- 2) each student writes something that s/he knows about each item in the list onto the paper sack, or leaves blank
- 3) 2-4 people groups are formed in the classroom and the group members share what they write with each other
- 4) Students are given small cards or papers, then they write what they learn newly about the key items on these cards and put them into the paper sack
- 5) the information in the sack is shared in small groups (Acikgoz, 2003)

Hourglass

It is often used to recall the pre-learned information and to establish ties with the new learned ones. Processes applied during the application are as follows:

An empty hourglass is drawn on the board or on the paper, then what will be learned is written in the middle of the hourglass. After the initial information about the learning material is written on the top of the hourglass, the topic is studied. Then the main themes of the learning material are written at the bottom of the hourglass, and finally the formed hourglass is expressed (Araz, 2014).

Writing poetry

Students sit in small groups. There is a sheet of paper on the hands of each of the group members. Everyone writes a line about the given topic on the paper and passes it to the one who is next to him/her. In the second round, second lines are written on the given paper, and given to the next person. This process continues until the timeout. At the end, groups will have poems as many as the group members. Later on, poems are presented in the class (Kara, 2014).

Bingo

It allows students to understand the taught subjects by playing a game. Since it has intriguing aspects on students, this game facilitates them to gather their attentions.

- 1) the main concepts of topics or thoughts are determined
- 2) the determined items are written on the bingo cards randomly, or some squares are left blank
- 3) the prepared cards are distributed to students
- 4) while teacher studies the lesson, students cover up the mentioned concepts or ideas
- 5) If a student covers up three squares side by side horizontally, vertically or diagonally, s/he calls "bingo"
- 6) students repeat the processes on the 4th and 5th articles until the break time (Acikgoz, 2003).

Shift is yours

This technique was developed by the researcher inspired by Card-matching technique. According to this technique, both students sitting on the same desk are accepted as a group. At the beginning of the application, one of each group members is sent out the classroom. Those students are assigned to read a book in the school library. Other group members listen to the text, take some notes which seem important, and revise their notes in the classroom. Then, the sent members are called to come back. Students in the classroom share with their group mates the summaries of the text they listened to and their notes. This time, the students who were in the classroom are sent out. Teacher distributes worksheets to the latter ones. At the end of practice, the others come to the class again and they finalize the worksheets together.

Mind Mapping

A number of decks that are formed by writing all important concepts or thoughts on a subject on small cards are prepared as many as the number of students. Then, each student is given one of these decks and asked to place them by displaying the relationships between concepts or thoughts. Placing process can be performed on a desk, on a wall or on the floor. Students can do this work individually or in the group. The maps obtained are presented and described to the class. With this method, many significant relationships between the learned subjects are discovered (Buzan, 2008; Gunes, 2014).

METHOD

This study is a qualitative research that analyzes the effects of listening activities planned by active learning techniques towards students' attitudes for Turkish course. "Qualitative research is a research that uses some data collection tools such as; observation, survey and document analysis. And it is a qualitative process that aims to reveal the perceptions and events in the natural environment in a realistic and a holistic manner" (Yildirim and Simsek, 2006: 39). Qualitative researches that receive their data resources directly from the human analyze the facts and events in their natural environment. In this qualitative research, the survey form approach was adopted. At the end of the case sampling study, surveys have been conducted with three selected students from the study group by typical case sampling method that is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The aim of the surveys is to reveal the effectiveness of active learning method, the changes on students and consequently the effects on students' attitudes towards Turkish course. For this reason, an survey form which consists of four questions has been prepared. In the formation process of the form, an expert opinion from two faculty members was received, and necessary adjustments were made in accordance with their recommendations.

Participants

Table 1.

Gender	Number
Female	10
Male	10
Total	20

As seen in Table 1, the study group consists of 10 female and 10 male students. Students studying in the sixth grade are in the range of 12 -13 years old. The school where students in the study group are studying is located within the boundaries of a town. The students are members of the families from the middle and lower socio-economic structure.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data collected by survey forms, the content analysis method was used. "The underlying process in the content analysis is gathering the similar data together within the scope of certain concepts and themes and interpreting them by organizing in a way that the reader can understand" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006: 27). All surveys in the data analysis were recorded and transferred to the computer. First of all, the data were coded according to the predetermined concepts such as; effectiveness, interaction, comprehension diversity, and attitudes. At the end of the coding, the obtained concepts were grouped under the themes. At the third stage, the data was organized according to the codes and the themes. Finally, the findings were reviewed.

Credibility (internal validity): Students who were involved in the survey were chosen among the ones who attended all events. Thus, the validity of the data obtained during survey were tried to be increased (long-term interaction).

The data obtained in the study were coded by two people except the researcher. Coding were compared with each other, interpreted and questioned (Deep Focused data collection).

After the survey, an assesment meeting was held with the students. The data collected by the researcher was presented to the surveyed three students at this meeting. Participant students evaluated the results (Participant assessment).

Transferability (external validity): The researcher presented the data that he obtained as directly as possible. Typical case sampling was used from the purposeful sampling techniques. Active learning which is the subject of the study has been in great demand and its prevalence has been increasing rapidly. In this study whose applications aims to gain perspective towards description and method, three students have been selected in order to represent the class.

Consistency (internal reliability): The obtained data were directly presented to the readers in the form of quotations. Process, data collection tool, the position of the researcher were stated.

Verifiability (external reliability): The results were compared with the raw data by the researcher.

FINDINGS

At the end of the experimental study, surveys have been conducted with three chosen students by typical case sampling method. The purpose of the surveys is to get the students' views on the process. For this purpose, the prepared survey questions were asked to the field experts and these questions were re-arranged in accordance with the expert opinions. The survey form method was adopted in surveys. The surveys were recorded with a voice recorder. The students were asked about their permissions were received from students for recording. In addition, the surveyer helped with the recording process by taking notes where necessary. Of the experimental group students, E1, E2 and K1 were surveyed.

In order to understand the effectiveness of active learning techniques, the students were directed the question of *"What kind of differences are there between your method of studying the texts on 4. and 5. grades and studying them with active learning techniques? And Which one do you find more effective?"* The three students replied that active learning was more effective. E1 highlighted the code of understanding, while K1 put forward the code of entertaining and E2 brought forward the codes of game and solidarity. E1 said: *"I understand the text better with active learning techniques. I can transfer the main idea and the subject further. These techniques are very effective."* E2 said: *"Since we love the games very much, we gripped the text better with these techniques, and we found the answers together. Excitement and concern were mixed up. Everyone was trying to do something. Somebody was taking the idea forward and we were interpreting it."* With these statements, E1 and E2 expressed that these techniques, especially group studies were like a game and they increased the solidarity and cooperation among students. K1 phrased that active learning was fun and facilitative for understanding with this expression: *"with active learning techniques, our courses became more fun. I can understand everything so much better."* In order to understand the impact of active learning on the classroom interaction, students were directed the question of *"In what way did active learning techniques affect the classroom interaction? Did these techniques develop your friendship relations?"*. As an answer, E1 put forward the codes of solidarity and sharing; K1 highlighted the codes of socializing and peacemaking; E2 brought to the fore the codes of cooperation and synergy. E1 said: *"It was a solidarity and sharing. There was a unity and cooperation, as our ancestors had said 'two heads are better than one'. Two-people can do much better than what one person can do alone. There is a great difference between what they do. If you do not know something, you are asking it to one of your groupmates, and if s/he does not know the answer, you are asking it to another one. Thus, information is spread out to everyone. We sometimes asked for help from the teacher; but the teacher led us to other groups. Thus, we have shared the information with other groups in the class. Knowledge grows when shared."* K1 said: *"We asked each other's ideas. Groups were always different. We all socialized with each other better, all resentments were fixed."*; E2 said: *"Interaction, solidarity, and cooperation increased among us. Everyone helped each other."* In order to understand the impact on the students' comprehension of active learning techniques, the question of *"Did active learning techniques affect you to understand the text you listened to and to answer the questions about the text? Did matching cards, paper sacks, mind maps, etc. influence you to understand the text better?"* directed to the students. E1 and E2 put forward the codes of understanding and comprehending; while K1 highlighted the codes of pleasure and game. E1 used these phrases regarding the materials used in active learning techniques: *"These materials facilitated for us to find the subject, main ideas and supporting ideas; they developed us and allowed us to understand the text better."* E2 said: *"They made us understand the text, and helped us to comprehend it"*, while K1 said: *"We both studied and enjoyed and played a game at the same time. The materials developed our ability to understand."* In order to understand the diversity of active learning techniques, the question of *"How did you find the active learning techniques? What are your views on these techniques?"* directed to the students. E1 brought forward the code of facilitator of understanding; K1 highlighted the code of developer of understanding; and E2 put forward the codes of entertaining and educational. E1: *"After learned these techniques, I try to summarize the things I heard in my mind, then I find the subject, and I try to figure out the main idea. In Poetry writing technique, someone writes a line, then another friend tries to write something relevant, then it became harmony here. This technique*

encourages group work." K1 said: *"They are very good techniques. With these techniques, my mind developed, I understand everything better now."* E2 said: *"They are different, entertaining and informative."* In order to understand the impact of active learning techniques over students' attitudes towards Turkish course, the question of *"Did you find Turkish courses enjoyable and fun before? Did active learning techniques bring out a change in your perspective on Turkish courses?"* was directed to the students. Three students were seen to have positive changes in their attitudes towards Turkish course. Three students put forward the codes of "fun, enjoyable, interesting, and like a game" for these techniques. E1 said: *"Turkish courses used to be boring in the past, I understood somethings but I did not understand them effectively, these techniques helped me understand everything better. Now, I can find the event or characters of the text in what I listen to or I read more easily. It made my summarizing easier, so I can write more extensive summaries. Turkish courses became more enjoyable through these techniques. They draw my attention now."* With these phrases, E1 expressed that he could easily identify the text elements by active learning techniques and his summarizing skills developed through them. K1 said: *"When I was on 4th and 5th grades, Turkish course was very boring. While applying active learning techniques, we both learned the lesson and had fun as well. Turkish courses began to be more enjoyable and fun."* And E2 said: *"When we were in 4th and 5th grades, we did not show much interest towards Turkish courses, since we loved to play games more than anything. I both had fun and I played games while applying active learning techniques and I was with my friends and I was learning, as well. We were groups and everyone was engaged in doing somethings. These techniques helped us learn. There is a huge difference between my learning capability in 4th and 5th grades and this year's learning capacity of me."* K1 stated that Turkish course became more enjoyable and fun, while E2 expressed the positive developments in his attitudes towards Turkish course.

The themes generated in the surveys with the students as a result of the encoding are as follows:

- Developing positive attitudes
- Classroom interaction
- Facilitating understanding and comprehension
- Game and entertainment

CONCLUSION

At the end of the case sampling study, surveys have been conducted with three students chosen from the study group by typical case sampling method. The students were asked four questions in order to understand the effectiveness and diversity of active learning techniques, their effects on students' interactions in the classroom, and on their comprehension and attitudes towards Turkish course. Students expressed that active learning techniques were effective, fun and like a game. They also stated that these techniques increased the solidarity and cooperation in the classroom; they were effective to identify text elements such as main idea, supporting idea, topic, event, character, place, and time; they trained while entertaining them, and with these techniques, Turkish course became more enjoyable and fun. When the relevant literature is reviewed about active learning techniques, in the studies conducted for both Turkish course and other courses, these techniques seemed to be effective in accessing acquisitions and developing positive attitudes. In this respect, the results of this study are consistent with other studies in the field of educational sciences. Aykac (2005) reveals that the learning environments prepared for active learning affect students' attitudes towards the courses and their communication skills in a positive way. Tacman (2007) and Turkben (2015) also reveal that the classroom environment created by active learning methods for university students (to Tacman) and sixth grade Turkish course students (to Turkben) brings positive effects in terms of cognitive awareness, respectability, cooperation, individual responsibility and active participation. Maden (2013) found that active learning techniques positively affected the academic success of sixth grade students in spelling and punctuation and their attitudes towards Turkish course. Guney (2011) determined that the course content based on active learning techniques influenced the academic achievement of eight graders in teaching 'gerunds' in a more effective way than traditional methods as well as their attitudes to Turkish course and the persistence of the lesson. Sallabas (2011) revealed that active learning techniques positively affected the speaking skills of middle school students in the Turkish course. Aksid and Sahin (2011) state that using active learning methods in a Geography lesson affects both cognitive and affective learning skills in a positive way. Altuna, Aydin, Ozfidan, and Amenabav (2013) imply that the use of active learning techniques in Science and Technology education influences independent learning skills of middle school students positively. Ozbay and Akdag (2013) reveal that active learning techniques are extremely effective in teaching 'idioms', they also create entertaining and educational learning environment for students, promote their reading, writing and study skills, and offer some independent study opportunities. According to them, these techniques are effective in terms of providing permanent information, as a result of being 'active' in writing, discussing and studying, gaining self-confidence, offering self-control, creating group awareness, supporting collaborative and social learning, and learning by experiencing. Guneyli (2007), in his study that he conducted with fifth graders, found that effective learning activities were more effective than traditional teaching

in terms of comprehension of what you read and written expression skills in the attitudes and goals plan towards Turkish course. Active learning is based on the principle of student's carrying the learning responsibility in learning process and his/her being directly involved in that process. It can be effective, if it is enriched by the theory of multiple intelligences and the theory of learning styles and integrated into education design and used in all subjects –particularly in Turkish courses, within the context of accessing to the acquisitions and developing positive attitudes towards courses.

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